

Inside the Issue

BEHIND YOUR BEHAVIOR

Explore how your brain deals with situations and responds to it's stimulus, resulting in your behavior. Page 2!

UNLOCKING YOUR BRAIN

Bust myths about your mind and how to take unlock the power in your brain! Page 3!

TEENS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Learn about the effects scrolling on social media has on your brain and how the law is working against it. Page 4-5!

CAMP PALI: TO GO OR NOT TO GO?

6th graders are going to Camp Pali on March 21st to the 23rd. Should you go to Camp Pali? Find out why or why not. Page 8!

5 MODERN SCIENTIFIC BREAKTHROUGHS

Read about some recent scientific breakthroughs! Page 9!

FEATURES

An article on feminsim! A short story, and a poem! Page 10-11!

Parras Roar Authors and Editors



Priya
Ramcharan
Editor in
Chief &
Writer



Alexandra
Manss
Features
Editor &
Writer



Daniella Gross
Art Editor &
Writer



Amandine
Schott
Contributing
Writer

Letter From The Editor

"The mind reflects the world and the world reflects the mind" - James Peirce

In this stimulating issue, our writers examine the Human mind and brain.

What drives our motivations, anxiety, and how we function? Our mind! When we separate fact from fiction and break down our brain's wiring, we can become even better humans! We also look at major scientific breakthroughs, advances in car tech, and the effects of social media on our brains. We have a debate on attending Camp Pali, which is open to comments! Scroll through this fascinating and intricate issue and take a peek in your mind!

A stylized, handwritten signature in white ink, likely belonging to Priya Ramcharan.

Priya
Ramcharan
Editor in Chief

Behind Your Behavior

An exploration of the neurological background that sets the stage for your motivations, identity, and emotions.

By Priya Ramcharan

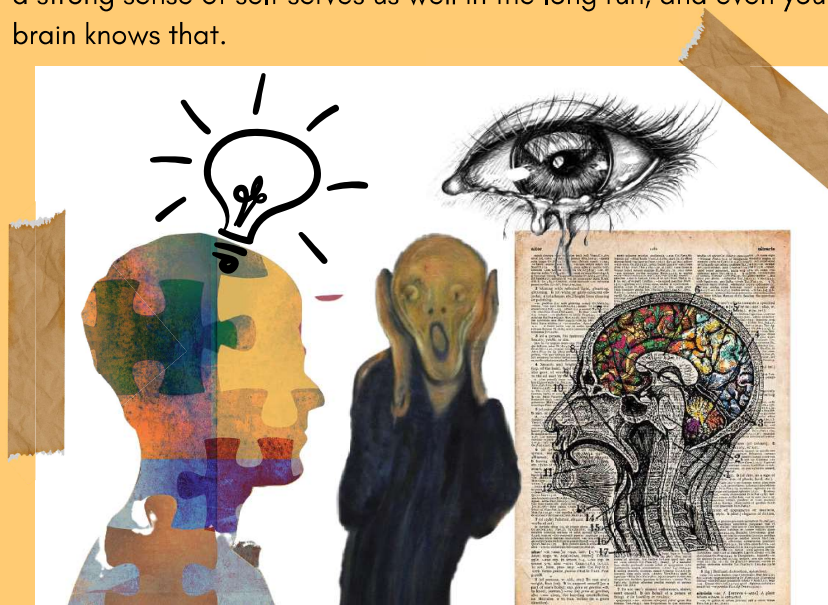


What is the science behind your brain developing? What chemicals fire off to trigger your social anxiety, the forming of your personality and identity, and your emotions. Go behind the scenes for the show you put on for the world.

Finding your identity is finding who you are in the world, and that means how people perceive you. Let's say identity is your personality, the way you act and think. James Marcia, a social psychologist from the University of British Columbia describes identity formation during adolescence as involving both decision points and commitments with respect to ideologies (religion, politics) and interests. He theorizes that finding an identity is one of the most pivotal and paramount excursions of the human mind. It is so important, it even affects brain chemistry. The region called the ventral medial prefrontal cortex in our brains produces a fundamental model of our self, and places it in mental time. In doing so, this suggests, it may be the source of our sense of self or identity. Psychologists have long noticed that our mind handles information about one's self differently from other details. Memories that reference the self are easier to recall than other forms of memory. They benefit from what researchers have called a self-reference effect, in which information related to one's self is privileged and more salient in our thoughts. Self-related memories are distinct from both episodic memory, the category of recollections that pertains to specific events and experiences, and semantic memory, which connects to more general knowledge, such as the color of grass and the names of family members. Our brains value our identity and treat knowledge relating to it as different. This could also mean that humans listen more when people are discussing themselves, an inherently selfish trait. Having a strong sense of self serves us well in the long run, and even your brain knows that.

As our brains develop, we also are exposed to social situations where our development can be influenced. There are many ways that people can influence our behavior, but perhaps one of the most important is that the presence of others seems to set up expectations. We do not expect people to behave randomly, but to behave in certain ways in particular situations. Each social situation entails its own particular set of expectations about the "proper" way to behave. One way in which these expectations become apparent is when we look at the roles that people play in society. Social roles are the part people play as members of a social group. With each social role you adopt, your behavior changes to fit the expectations both you and others have of that role. How does this look from a neuroscience perspective? Our brains are hardwired to perform in group settings because we are social creatures. Just like monkeys and animals, we lived in tribes or groups. In order to survive, we needed each other. And in order to stay in a group, we needed to play a role and be accepted. We couldn't act outrageously or differ from those around us, or else we would be isolated from the group, and when alone we are less safe. We play into social standards and norms, because conformity is a survival instinct. It is in our blood to relate to those around us. Our friend groups can be compared to tribes. When you are separated from your friends while others are in their groups, it feels uncomfortable. This is because when our brains see groups of people, it is thinking in a survival perspective and feels threatened and fearful of the large groups. What we call social anxiety now, was terror of death in the jungle, so our brains act accordingly. Our palms get sweaty, our digestive system stops working and makes our stomach ache, and we start overthinking.

Our emotions are influenced by thought, and vice versa. Everything you do and the way you act has layers of intricate hardwiring and reason. The more we understand our mind, from how we analyze our development, and how we react to situations, the more advanced we become. We live in an everchanging world, and we will have to adapt as we grow. The more we grapple with our brain and our existence in our heads, the more we can control it and understand ourselves. So continue to learn about your mind, and advance as a person.



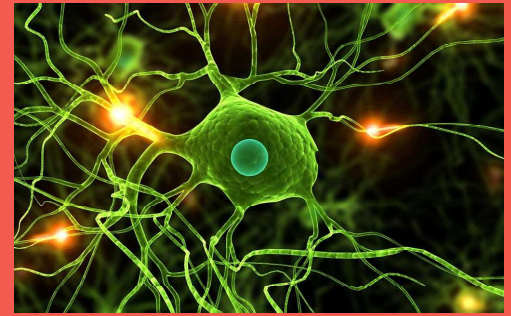
The Secret to Unlocking



YOUR BRAIN



BY: DANIELLA GROSS



It's pink, mushy, slimy, and soft. The living organism sits inside of your head devouring all the knowledge you obtain. It stores all of your memories and grows new cells constantly. It sends signals to the rest of your body controlling the actions and words that you say. It sounds almost like a horror story! However, all of these attributes belong to one thing that all humans are born with: the brain!

.....

Probably the most important organism in our bodies, brains help humans develop, learn, think, speak, hear, sense, taste, run, see, function, and just about everything you could think of. Scientists have been studying the brain for thousands and thousands of years! The earliest study of the brain can be dated back to the 17th century BC. Not only have our brains developed and adapted over millions of years, but we also have discovered ways to help our brains grow and stay strong. The real question is, are certain brains different from others? Can all brains learn at the same speed, grow, adapt, and think the same way?

Some people might say that they are the smartest in their class or the best at solving equations! Some might argue that they are "stupid" and can't do schoolwork because of the size of their brains. The truth is, the size of the brain doesn't make a difference! The genius and mathematician Albert Einstein's brain was actually smaller than average. Another myth is that your personality relies on which part of the brain you mainly use, left brain or right brain. But you actually use both sides of the brain at the same time, logic and creativity. So what exactly makes your brain "bigger" in terms of knowledge and intelligence? Studies have shown that people who are typically smarter or "geniuses" make a lot more chemical connections and their brains are wired differently. Some people even believe that genetics are behind intelligence. One study showed that people with more intelligence have brains that make connections from one part of the brain to the other. Further, the study showed that these people often block irrelevant information and only remember what is necessary to retain.

So, is it possible for someone with an "average brain" to expand their knowledge and make more connections between parts of the brain? The answer is yes! Taking care of yourself and promoting mental health plays a big part in this. Things like sleep, fasting, mnemonic devices, expanding vocabulary, creating art, learning new instruments, reading, and even dancing all train your brain to become stronger, healthier and make better links! So now when you do anything, think of everything your brain is doing to keep your body functioning in that moment!



< Notes

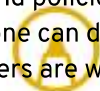
By Priya Ramcharan

January 29, 2022 at 12:17 PM

One platform. Billions of users. When so many young children who are still maturing and can be easily influenced are all connected on a cooperate, money focused algorithm, how can we be surprised when there are negative effects? The algorithms on Tik Tok and other popular media platforms allow for users to consume content on a FYP (For You Page) without ever following an account. This means they use data based on how long you spend on a video, what you like, what comments you look at, and give you suggested videos. They monetize the time you spend on the app and pull you in for long periods of time. This opens a Pandora's box for the spread of hate speech, misinformation, conspiracies, racism, negativity, toxic content, bullying, and comparison. Social Media has been to blame for big problems such as partisan and national division, violence and hate towards political/racial groups and so much more. But what about the effects on you personally? When you open up Instagram or Tik Tok, what does it do to your brain? Researchers have noted a rise in depression among young people since about 2012, with the use of social media among teens and their amount of time spent online increasing in close proximity. Multiple studies have found a strong link between heavy social media and an increased risk for depression, anxiety, loneliness, self-harm, and even suicidal thoughts. Social media may promote negative experiences such as inadequacy about life or appearance. The latter is a huge problem for the teen girl community. Girls ages 13-19 are all subject to the comparison effect. When people post content, it is a very filtered and manufactured perspective of reality. Someone's Instagram is a curated and warped illusion of their real unedited life. You might see pictures of someone's 'perfect' body or their 'perfect' life. Though the reality is far from perfect, this can alter a growing person when they examine their life and compare it to the fake life they see on a screen. This leads to being on the app a depressing experience. But when a user is addicted, and almost every user is addicted, it is hard to separate themselves from that feeling. This leads to more and more toxic content, and more and more bad feelings.



Recently, the world has been more astute to these harmful effects. In fact, activists have spoken against social media platforms and policymakers have been holding briefings and discussing regulations. But how do we hold these companies accountable, if we even should? Companies like Facebook and Tik Tok have monopolies in their fields and have gotten used to the idea there are no consequences for the way they manipulate and monetize their users. Policymakers are genuinely scared that media platforms spread misinformation that would lead to the toppling of Democracy, exhibit A being Facebook's role in the 2016 and 2020 elections and the Jan 6th attack on the capital. With this incentive, they have pushed for regulations in content. The California legislature passed a law in 2008 which makes it illegal to post harmful information on the internet. Posting harmful information on the internet is a crime known as indirect cyber-harassment or indirect electronic harassment. Facebook has also tried to take down posts spreading wrong information on topical issues such as vaccines, voting, masks, and politics. However, it isn't enough. Regulating these companies is incredibly hard because it prompts moral and ethical discussions on freedom of speech. Just the simple content censoring is hard to execute. The UK has found a successful way to censor content. For content that is harmful, but not illegal, social media platforms self-regulate through "community standards" and "terms of use" that users agree to when joining. This type of material can promote violence, self-harm, or cyberbullying. It can also include indecent, disturbing, or misleading content. On the contrary, US Facebook has kept internal research secret for two years that suggests its Instagram app makes body image issues worse for teenage girls, according to a leak from the tech firm. Since at least 2019, staff at the company have been studying the impact of their product on its younger users' states of mind. Their research has repeatedly found it is harmful for teenage girls. Mark Zuckerberg, Facebook's chief executive, claimed social media was more likely to have positive mental health effects. In May, Adam Mosseri, who is in charge of Instagram, said he had seen research suggesting its effects on teenagers' mental health was probably "quite small". What makes Facebook not accountable? Facebook's ad campaign centers on the Communications Decency Act. The 1996 law has a provision, Section 230, which makes websites generally not liable for the content posted by users and provides the legal basis platforms use to justify their content moderation policies. Facebook is holding onto this law for dear life. Right now, it is up to the common social media user to use it in moderation and healthily. This is because regulations and policies might not be put in place as fast as needed. No one can dispute the negative effects of social media, so policymakers are working hard to take down our platforms that manipulate their users.



SHIFTING THE FOCUS

By: Alexandra Manss

You go in for five minutes and waste an hour. Was it an hour? Maybe it was two. Few will question the fact that people are spending an increasing amount of time on social media platforms. Social media has warped our perception of reality. No matter how much we tell ourselves that “it’s fake,” the effects are real. When teens, especially girls, scroll through these platforms, they become enveloped in hundreds of pictures and videos. They see hundreds of people posting a highlight reel of their life, relationships, and bodies. It’s hard not to look at these people living seemingly perfect lives in seemingly perfect bodies and question our own lives or feel bad about how we look. With this first-hand experience that we can all relate to, accompanied by the rising trend of mental health issues from depression to body dysmorphia, there is no doubt that social media has made a huge impact on all of our lives.

But what is the extent of this impact? A 2018 Pew Research Center’s survey of nearly 750 13- to 17-year-olds found that 45% are online almost constantly and 97% use a social media platform, such as YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, or Snapchat. Another research survey conducted showed that approximately 69% of adults use these platforms as well. Seeing that all of these platforms use algorithms designed to be addictive and are continually linked to anxiety, depression, and other mental health disorders, this puts a large population of people at risk for mental health issues. It is no doubt that social media is dangerous if not used carefully. Social media creates a nasty cycle that sucks us in and gets us hooked as we look for social interaction but end up farther from it. It is up to us to be responsible and monitor our usage of these platforms.

Unfortunately, with social media having integrated its way into nearly every aspect of our society, it becomes incredibly difficult to escape its integration into our own lives. Regardless, in an effort to protect our mental health, we cannot sit back as this addiction grows in us. One way to protect our mental health while using these platforms is to change our mindset. Ask yourself this question: Who do you want to be remembered as? What do you want to be remembered for? Social media can create this perception that we have to have the ideal body, picturesque meals, aesthetic rooms, etc. In reality, is that what you really want to be remembered for? Do you want people to say “oh yeah, (s)he’s the one who always has nice outfits”? There is so much more than superficial aspects that are displayed in social media. We need to focus on those other aspects. The aspects of your personality and the qualities about you that make you unique. Instead, let’s shift the focus on being “the girl who is so kind,” “the guy who always stands up for what’s right,” or “the friend who was always there with the best advice.” There is so much more to you than the number of followers you have or the number of likes you have collected. There is so much more to you than the pictures you post or the life you pretend to live. So the question is: who do **you** want to be remembered as?





Cars:

THE NEXT GENERATION

By: Alexandra Manss



When we think about the future, many people imagine a lot of technological advances. This is especially true in cars! Think of all the advances cars have made in just over a century when the first-ever car was created. The automotive and tech industries are some of our most advanced, and quickest to advance, industries, so what happens when these two majorly innovative industries collide? We get bigger and better innovations than ever before! This year, you will begin to see color-changing cars with a full cinema experience on the road! You will even begin seeing car-owners sliding out their complete, portable kitchens out of the side of their cars! This year, that technological automotive future that you imagined may not be so far away!

BMW doesn't want their customers to have to worry about the color of their car or entertaining passengers on those long car rides. With BMW's new fully-electric SUV, the iX Flow concept car, customers are equipped with a 31-inch theatre screen display and a color-changing exterior. But how can a car change colors? The color-changing exterior is made possible with E ink technology. This technology is wrapped around the car, and with the touch of a button, the color is changed as electric currents cause different pigments to rise to the surface. The color-changing effect can be displayed in one solid color, stripes, blotches, a gradient from front to back, or even rotate through the whole spectrum from side to side. Currently, the car can only change colors through the grayscale, but officials working on the iX say that, theoretically, the technology could offer a wide spectrum of colors. This color-changing technology can provide a variety of benefits from signifying the battery status of the car to regulating the car's temperature. Not only does the iX Flow contain this color-changing aspect, but it also has a 31-inch panorama display with surround sound, Amazon Fire TV integration, and My Mode Theatre. With My Mode Theatre, passengers can lower the screen, lights, and sunblinds to get a never-before-seen in-car cinematic experience, setting new standards for in-car entertainment everywhere!



BMW isn't the only car company looking to equip their electric cars with more amenities. Another car that's just hit the roads--and trails--this year is the Rivian R1T truck. This fully electric truck is equipped with a complete kitchen that slides seamlessly in and out of a side-access Gear Tunnel. The Camp Kitchen feature includes a 2-burner induction stovetop, a 4-gallon collapsable sink, and a 30-piece kitchen set that includes everything from spatulas to a kettle. The R1T truck doesn't stop at a kitchen, though. For the complete camping experience, Rivian also offers a separate package with a 3-person Medium Rooftop Tent which mounts on top of the truck's bed. With the Rivian R1T, glamping has been taken to a new level and become even more accessible for car owners than ever before!

Ford has also been working on stocking their electric cars with even more features, not refraining from making claims about their F-150 Lightning having the ability to power anything from an entire house to a construction site's worth of tools for multiple days. General Motors has expanded the current functions of cars around the globe with their upcoming GMC Hummer EV which can drive diagonally using a feature called the "Crabwalk." Who knows what could be next? Maybe all of those futuristic realities with flying cars isn't so far after all!

CORONAVIRUS VARIANTS

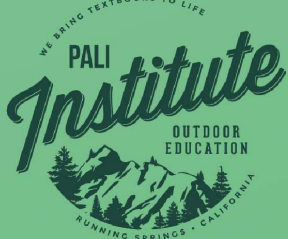
By Amandine Schott

Viruses are constantly changing and mutating, sometimes forming new variants of themselves. Some variants are less harmful than others and disappear while others are more dangerous and don't leave. The two major variants of the coronavirus right now are the Delta and the Omicron variants. The Omicron virus is especially contagious but is less deadly than the Delta variant. Unfortunately, there could be another variant. Deltacron is one of the most recent forms of COVID-19, named this way because it is a combination of the Delta and Omicron variants. This is known as recombination, something that happens when there is more than one variant. Deltacron seems to contain, "omicron-like genetic signatures within the delta genomes," according to Bloomberg News. This strain has been found in 25 cases of COVID-19 in Cyprus, but it has only been found in Cyprus and not anywhere else yet. After discovering this variant Cyprus scientists sent it to GISAID an international database that tracks changes in COVID-19. Eleven samples came from people who were hospitalized because of COVID-19 and fourteen came from the general population. Although many scientists argue that this strain is actually a lab processing error, It is too early to know if Deltacron is going to be more dangerous than the Delta and Omicron variant.

Camp Pali Debate

By: Amandine Schott

Camp Pali is a fun science camp that is located in Running Springs, California. It is about 2 hours away from Parras Middle School and is an overnight camp. Students gain many unique experiences during their time at the camp. This year the sixth graders are going from Monday, March 21st to Wednesday, March 23rd.



SHOULD YOU GO TO CAMP PALI OR NOT?



Yes!

Though it takes a 2-hour bus ride, many students want to go. Sixth-grader Mychaela Taylor says, “I’m looking forward to hanging out, having fun, and enjoying quality time with my friends.” During Camp Pali, students get to spend time with their friends and enjoy being out in the wild. Camp Pali is a great way to learn new things and bond with the people around you. Eleven years old, Audrey Hunt says, “I want to go because I want to have the experience of the camp!” Camp Pali is the perfect place to gain experience, during your time there you will do archery, rope courses, and for the first time, Camp Pali is allowing sixth-graders on the zipline! This is a great opportunity to try new things with your friends and to have fun.

No!

You must pay \$390 to go to Camp Pali! That’s very expensive, just to go for three days with some friends. The Omicron variant is especially contagious these days, and Camp Pali would be a prime transmission spot. According to a sixth-grader, “I am not going because, the price! And I read some reviews.” If you are somebody who is not going to the camp you will stay with one of the many teachers that remain at Parras. You will stay with the teacher you are assigned to all day instead of changing classes.

You do fun projects for each subject and you have no homework! Of course, you would still have to go to P.E. or band, but if you have wheel as an elective you will not be attending any wheel classes.

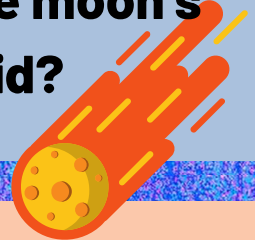


What do you think? Let us know on google classroom or submit a feature!

The Modern Mind

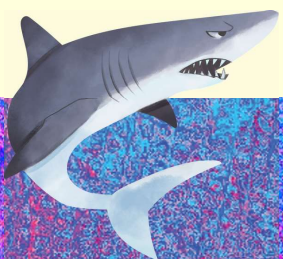
Some recent groundbreaking scientific research

Saturn's 'Death Star' moon could have a secret underground ocean
Researchers say that Mimas, Saturn's smallest moon – whose resemblance to Star Wars' battle station inspired its nickname – revealed the first clue that it could be a "stealth ocean world" after NASA's Cassini probe spotted a strange wobble in the moon's rotation. Could the wobble be a sloshing of liquid?



A meteor crashed on Earth, on the 28 of September 1969, inside of this asteroid, dust was found. This dust wasn't any special dust. Billions of years before the sun came into existence, dust was spread throughout space, thanks to a dying star. A bit of this stardust got trapped inside a meteorite that later crashed onto Earth. This dust is dated as the oldest material found on Earth!

A new discovery shows that sharks intestines slowly move digested meals through spring-shaped spirals or nested funnels, depending on the species, to eke out every last calorie and get rid of the rest. Researchers found that these spiraled organs also resemble the design and function of Tesla valves. The twists, turns and funnels ease fluids forward, which could be an energy-saving form of digestion.

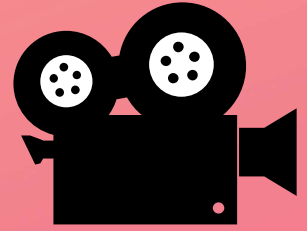


January Features

A New Year Of Talent

Gender Bias

By: Kathleen Pham; 8th Grade



Sexism and misogyny are common topics in today's society. But how are they specifically affecting different fields? Whether people are discussing their age or lack of skill for a job, men seem to be put on a pedestal compared to women. The gender pay gap is often mentioned when discussing the different hurdles women must overcome in the workforce. A Forbes article by Tom Spiggle outlines the reasons for the existence of the gender pay gap. In a similar sense, an article from the Washington Post answers the question of "Why the Age of 40 is so important in Hollywood." The writer, Jeff Guo, explains the film industry's dismay for aging women while male actors seem to become even more successful as they grow older. These challenges are what keep women from attaining the same success as men. Although women are more prevalent in the workforce and media than in the past, many obstacles prevent them from reaching the same success as their male counterparts.

The current gender pay gap crisis is a prime example of a systematic disadvantage women go through in the workforce. Explanations of this issue often stem from maternal obligations, which result in unpaid work, and gender bias. As stated in the Forbes article, "This 'career preference' can be due to societal or cultural norms and pressures, as well as teacher bias. For example, teachers sometimes assume girls will have inferior math skills compared to boys, which can play an indirect role in dissuading women from entering STEM-related fields." As young girls are growing up and learning about other careers, many of them are discouraged from STEM subjects due to the intimidating facade surrounding them. Teachers can feed into this narrative by creating an environment that makes it more difficult for a girl to stand out amidst her male peers. If girls are not encouraged to study these topics at a younger age, it could suppress their potential job opportunities in the future. Another factor highlighted by the text states, "...women tend to have less time and energy to focus on work because they're spending more time doing unpaid work at home, like household chores and raising children. Women may be doing as much as 30% more unpaid work than men." Many male employers could be unaware of separate responsibilities their female workers have. This results in an unfair comparison to their more "hard-working" male employees. A parallel can be drawn in humanities as well, where a trend of underrepresentation continues to prosper. In a New York Times article by Julia Jacobs, she speaks with the executive editor of Arnet News, Julia Halperin, who states, "Museums are much more likely to highlight exhibitions and acquisitions that look good in a news release... No museum is going to say, 'Our fall program is majority male artists', But they would say, 'Our program is majority female artists.'" By depicting a narrative of equality, museums portray a false idea that more female artists are being included in collections. Tokenizing female artists insinuates that their work is solely for marketing purposes. Halperin's idea is supported by the data that displays, "...between 2008 and 2018, only 11 percent of art acquired by the country's top museums for their permanent collections was by women. And contrary to any hope that acquisitions of artworks by women are inching upward, the percentage remained relatively stagnant, according to the data, released on Thursday." Museums are inflating the hope of more female artworks in collections even if they aren't active supporters. Even with the surge of equalistic ideas within those ten years, they haven't been implemented in artistic communities.

January Features



Backwards Day

By: Cody Dulmage; 6th Grade



Have your parents ever asked you to do a chore, and you say, "I don't have to do it on opposite day". Believe it or not, there is an actual day like this. Except it isn't called opposite day, it's called Backwards Day. It was a normal January day for Sarah Miller and Emily Scott on their family farm. Suddenly an idea came into their head. That evening they sat down and came up with further rules, and explanations. A year went by, and word got out. On January 31, 1962, it became a national day. They then started seeing people in their town doing things backward. Today the three most popular ways to celebrate are, calling people by their last name, wearing your shirt backwards, and have dessert first. The recipe of the day is a pineapple upside-down cake. Did this article inspire you to do things drawkcab?



New Years Poem

By: Cody Dulmage; 6th Grade



A New Year, no more fear,
Only cheer, a new day,
A new light, let's be bright,
A new year, don't mope,
Let's have hope, about the New Year!



Thank You!

FOR READING THIS ISSUE

**WE WRITE MONTHLY SO MARK YOUR
CALENDAR! IF YOU WANT TO
SUBMIT YOUR OWN CREATIVE WORK
OR WRITING, SUBMIT A FEATURE OR
REACH OUT TO US!**

